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The way forward: a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In response to General Assembly resolution 67/140, the present report is submitted in advance of its sixty-eighth session as a contribution to the High-level Meeting of the Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. This report is issued in conjunction with the last two preceding reports (A/66/128 and A/67/211), which provided recommendations on priority issues for inclusion in the outcome of the High-level Meeting.

During the past decade, the Assembly has sought urgent action for the realization of internationally agreed development goals, particularly the Millennium Development Goals, for persons with disabilities (see A/64/180, A/65/173, A/66/128 and A/67/211).

The current report reviews good practices and existing approaches to disability-inclusive development, drawing on the experience of the United Nations system in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues. The report concludes by recommending steps to include disability as an integral part of all development efforts, with a view to contributing to an action-oriented outcome document of the upcoming High-level Meeting.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to resolution 67/140, by which the General Assembly requested the submission of a contribution to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. Two previous reports to the General Assembly (A/66/128 and A/67/211) highlighted options for promoting the inclusion of disability in the global development agenda towards 2015 and beyond.

2. In its resolution 66/124, the Assembly decided to convene a High-level Meeting on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, to be held on 23 September 2013, to provide guidance to the international community on ensuring accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts. The meeting is expected to result in a concise, action-oriented outcome document.

3. The changing development landscape offers a significant opportunity for including disability in the mainstream development agenda. The present report addresses the continuing gap between policy and practice on the ground, and draws on the experiences of mainstreaming other cross-cutting issues for guidance in the progressive removal of existing barriers and obstacles to disability-inclusive development.

II. Disability in the changing development landscape

4. The adoption of the World Programme for Action concerning Disabled Persons in 1982 laid the foundation for a new approach to disability, with the goals of full participation and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The World Programme of Action reinforced the role of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development. Two decades later, negotiations began on the development of an international normative framework on disability that culminated in the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in 2006. The Convention provided a strong impetus to the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development, by emphasizing equal access for persons with disabilities to opportunities to contribute to, and share in, on an equal footing with others, the rewards of social and economic progress. The Convention has advanced the international normative framework greatly, through the prospect of making tangible improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities.

5. Underscoring the direct relevance of disability to the realization of internationally agreed development goals, the General Assembly reiterated the urgent need to mainstream disability in ongoing efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 (see A/64/180 and A/65/173). However, disability is included neither in the Goals nor in their related targets and indicators. As a result, there has been a dearth of specific policy commitments and accountability mechanisms for ensuring that persons with disabilities are included in efforts to reach the Goals. This has limited opportunities for persons with disabilities to access

essential resources, facilities and services that can enable them to contribute to and benefit from development processes that are available to the rest of society.[1]

6. Moreover, adequate data and statistics on persons with disabilities are lacking to track progress and evaluate the impact of the efforts towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The scarcity of disability data and statistics inhibits building an evidence-based case on ways in which eliminating barriers and promoting accessibility would be conducive to social progress and development that would benefit all members of society.

7. Ongoing discussions concerning the post-2015 development agenda have focused on the evolution of the global development landscape following the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000. The series of global crises — including economic, financial, food and energy insecurity — has underscored the need to incorporate the fundamental principles of human rights, equality and sustainability into the development agenda.[2] This has offered an ideal platform from which to address inequality and the aspirations of all peoples, including persons with disabilities.

8. There is growing recognition of the nexus between disability and development in the outcome documents that have emerged from major United Nations conferences and summits. The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) outcome document "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex), highlighted the inter-linkages between sustainable development and the active involvement and participation of persons with disabilities. However, further action needs to be taken so that persons with disability do not end up being referred to as a "vulnerable group" but rather, that disability itself will be considered as a cross-cutting theme in any emerging goals on sustainable development. In 2012, in the report entitled *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda, called for an integrated policy approach that is responsive to the aspirations of all people for a world free from fear and want.

9. The current debate on an inclusive approach to development provides a critical opportunity to address the concerns of persons with disabilities that had been omitted from the existing international development framework based on the Millennium Development Goals. All stakeholders in this context are encouraged to take urgent action to increase the visibility of the disability perspective in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

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[1] *Disability and the Millennium Development Goals* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.II.IV.10).

[2] The report (A/65/173) explored the impact of these multiple crises on persons with disabilities, reiterating the urgent need for action to integrate disability into the existing Millennium Development Goals and to continue efforts beyond 2015.

III. Progress achieved in including persons with disabilities in development efforts

A. Member States

10. In preparation for the present report, Member States were requested to provide: (a) an analysis regarding the situation of persons with disabilities; (b) information on good practices and/or guidelines for mainstreaming disability in development; and (c) recommendations for specific actions to be taken at the international and national levels in the next 5 to 10 years to address priority issues and challenges encountered in mainstreaming disability in development. Submissions were received from Member States,[3] entities of the United Nations system,[4] and civil society organizations.[5] A number of Member States[6] provided demographic information with a wide array of disabilities, and indicating that persons with disabilities fare worse than the general population in terms of social aspects and indicators of well-being. Information provided also indicated that, in general, women with disabilities continue to experience a greater burden of discrimination and inequality.

11. The following section highlights examples of efforts undertaken by Member States to mainstream persons with disabilities in development.

12. Many States reported improvement in laws, policies and programmes that promote the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society and development. Italy has recently adopted the first Italian Programme of Action for the promotion of the rights and the integration of persons with disabilities. Chile reported on the recent adoption of the national policy and plan of action for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities. Sweden's national strategic plan, based on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, would include specific goals to be achieved within five years. The parliament of the Republic of Moldova adopted a Strategy for Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Cyprus has also been developing a national action plan on disability with specific timelines, resources and goals. Honduras was updating its national policy on disability for inclusive development. Jamaica developed a national policy for persons with disabilities. The United Arab Emirates has adopted a national framework on

[3] Submissions in response to the note verbale from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat dated 14 January 2013 were received from 19 Member States: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, Ecuador, Finland, Greece, Honduras, Italy, Jamaica, Moldova, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

[4] Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO).

[5] CBM International Advocacy and Alliances, International Disability and Development Consortium, Leonard Cheshire Disability.

[6] Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Italy, Moldova, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

disability data and statistics by age and gender. Spain adopted the Spanish Strategy on Disability 2012-2020 and is currently preparing an accompanying plan of action.

13. Several States also reported the establishment of monitoring mechanisms for protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. For example, Cyprus reported that the Council of Ministers of the Republic had designated a focal point, a coordination mechanism, and an independent mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention. New Zealand designated and provided funding for an independent monitoring mechanism that comprises the Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Convention Coalition, a group of disabled persons' organizations. The Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues and the independent monitoring mechanism meet annually to discuss priorities and review progress.

14. Some Member States emphasized strategies for mainstreaming disability within their development cooperation initiatives. Australia reported that it is guided by the strategy, *Development for all: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program 2009-2014*.[7] Finland reported on its "disability diplomacy", through which Finnish experts with disabilities are tasked with raising awareness concerning discriminations against persons with disabilities at the international level. Finland further reported that its development cooperation, in seeking to mainstream disability in all development programmes, considers the availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability of benefits for persons with disabilities; the design and implementation of targeted projects that aim to improve services and opportunities for persons with disabilities; and the inclusion of disability in all policy dialogues, country negotiations and multilateral cooperation agreements. The United Kingdom is seeking to promote good practice by mainstreaming disability in international development programmes. Belgium emphasized the importance of strengthening the capacity of organizations of persons with disabilities in developing countries.

15. Several Member States reported on policy and legislative measures focused specifically on improving accessibility for persons with disabilities. Turkey reported that its 2005 Disability Law has prompted progress in accessibility to public buildings and transportation. Greece has enacted legal measures to ensure the physical accessibility of public spaces and services, and accessibility to online administrative services. Qatar included a project on enabling work environments for persons with disabilities in its Social Protection Sector Strategy.

16. Member States also reported on reforms undertaken to improve the inclusivity of social services. In Greece, children with disabilities may receive grants for transportation to maximize participation in school. In Ecuador, under the leadership of the Office of the Vice President, persons with disabilities receive discounted access to public transportation and entertainment in addition to tax exemption on goods, including drugs and prosthetic devices. The Republic of Moldova is reforming the system of social protection for persons with disabilities with a view to their inclusion in society. Brazil reported on its Living without Limits plan, through which funds are provided for the implementation of strategic action plans relating to education, health, social inclusion and accessibility.

[7] Australian Agency for International Aid, Canberra, 2008.

17. In 2012, the African Union established a new disability architecture comprised of legal, programmatic and institutional components. The programmatic component includes the Continental Plan of Action of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2010-2019), which was adopted by the African Union Conference of Ministers of Social Development, held in Addis Ababa from 26 to 30 November 2012. In conjunction with the Conference of Ministers of Social Development, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development organized a multi-stakeholder consultative meeting in Addis Ababa in November 2012. The meeting saw the launch of the African Disability Forum, which seeks to raise awareness, strengthen evidence-based research, support capacity-building and establish and support a partnership between stakeholders within and beyond the African continent to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and a disability-inclusive development agenda in Africa and beyond.

B. United Nations system

18. The United Nations system has continued to innovate and implement policies and programmes to mainstream disability in its respective plans and programmes of work.

1. Progress on activities to include disability in programmes of work

19. Several United Nations agencies have taken steps to include disability in their programmes of work. The United Nations Secretariat Department of Economic and Social Affairs has brought all stakeholders together regularly for consultative meetings and discussions, in conjunction with the sessions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, among others. Priority issues addressed by the Department during the reporting period have included accessibility, disability statistics, the situation of particular groups with disabilities (such as women, youth, children and indigenous persons), emergency and disaster response, and international development cooperation.

20. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has continued to work with the Special Rapporteur on disability of the Commission for Social Development in promoting the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, co-organizing a meeting to establish a multi-stakeholder partnership, the African Disability Forum, and addressing priority issues, such as mental health and women with disabilities.

21. ESCWA reported on a number of regional workshops on disability statistics and methods for measuring disability that have taken place in the region. ESCWA was also preparing a regional action plan focused on capacity development of countries to produce more reliable data on persons with disability. ESCWA has published a pamphlet on mainstreaming disability into development processes,[8] which has both provided an overview of disability in the Arab region and highlighted key issues and challenges to mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

[8] "Managing Change: Mainstreaming Disability into the Development Process" (E/ESCWA/SDD/2012/Brochure.1).

22. ECA has conducted a number of studies, providing opportunities for mainstreaming disability in policy advice, given to Member States. Within ECA, a policy has been drafted on the employment of persons with disabilities and measures have been taken to make the working environment disability-friendly.

23. ECLAC recently published a first tentative mapping of disability in the region in the 2012 Social Panorama of Latin America.[9]

24. UNICEF spearheaded, in 2012, the multi-stakeholder Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities, drawing membership from more than 200 organizations across the world to advance the rights of children with disabilities. UNICEF has created the largest source of internationally comparable data on children with disabilities in developing countries through its Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and is currently finalizing its new modules for disability screening and assessment.

25. WHO reported that unmet health-care needs disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, with disability being common among women, older persons and poor households. The prevalence, in this context, is higher in lower-income countries than in higher-income countries. In 2012, the WHO Task Force on Disability launched an organizational *Toolkit on Disability*. The *Toolkit* provided a simple introduction to disability mainstreaming and to inclusive development for WHO offices in countries, areas and territories. The goal of the *Toolkit* is to help remove barriers in-house and to highlight entry points for mainstreaming disability in technical programmes.

26. Several United Nations agencies have reported on their efforts to promote knowledge and skills-building. UNHCR launched a global training series on disability inclusion late in 2011, to raise awareness regarding disability issues and to make UNHCR and partner programmes more inclusive. In 2012, OHCHR disseminated new training materials on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, providing guidance on practical ways for mainstreaming through implementation.

27. ICAO has long-established international Standards and Recommended Practices and has developed related guidelines on the accessibility of air transportation for persons with disabilities. These Standards and Recommended Practices have recently been updated and are published in the form of the ICAO *Manual on Access to Air Transport by Persons with Disabilities*. ICAO also provides, inter alia, guidance on the provision of information and training for professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities, in keeping with the general obligations of States under the Convention.

28. UNESCO reported that the online knowledge community known as, "Building Inclusive Societies for Persons with Disabilities", was developed around the broader theme of inclusion for persons with disabilities to share knowledge and promote partnerships. At the World Summit on the Information Society review event, which took place in February 2013, UNESCO launched the *WSIS+10 Review and Strategic Directions for Building Inclusive Knowledge Societies for Persons with Disabilities*.

[9] Available from: www.cepal.org.

2. Views on the post-Millennium Development Goals development framework to ensure the inclusion of disability

29. Several United Nations agencies made recommendations for specific actions at the international and national levels in the next 5 to 10 years to address priority issues and challenges encountered in mainstreaming disability in development. ECA, ECLAC, ESCWA, UNICEF and WHO have called for strengthening the evidence base on disability, and for improved monitoring and evaluation of policies, legislation, plans and programmes, and have recommended increased, concerted efforts on disability and accessibility.

30. Furthermore, the following were recommended as key issues: increasing awareness; promoting good practices; including persons with disabilities in social protection systems; disability-inclusive international cooperation; equity and social inclusion for policymaking inclusive of persons with disabilities; capacity-building and promoting a rights-based approach to disability in the context of the post-2015 framework.

C. Civil society organizations

31. Civil society organizations are continuing to improve capacity-building, and piloting and replicating good practices to mainstream disability in development programmes and projects. They have used these findings to make recommendations for specific actions.

32. For instance, a joint position paper on the post-2015 development agenda developed by civil society organizations, including CBM, International Disability Alliance (IDA) and IDDC, recommended that the post-2015 development agenda be inclusive of the perspectives of persons with disabilities taking into account issues of inclusion and accessibility in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, including article 32 on development cooperation. The paper also recommended the use of disability markers in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and projects to mainstream disability.

33. Noting the reference to disability in General Assembly resolution 67/226, adopted at its quadrennial comprehensive policy review, the International Disability and Development Consortium suggested the establishment of common indicators that can be proposed to the pertinent governing boards of United Nations agencies for including disability in the operational activities of the United Nations system. Leonard Cheshire Disability made recommendation for including disability indicators explicitly in any goals and targets resulting from the post-2015 development agenda, to support a mandatory requirement to collect data disaggregated by disability status. Leonard Cheshire Disability has compiled good practices for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the areas of inclusive education, access to livelihoods, and strengthened young voices.

IV. Pathways to a disability-inclusive development agenda

34. The ongoing efforts on disability inclusion — guided by the international normative framework on disability — have the potential to bring about transformative change in the lives of persons with disabilities. While important

progress has been made, trends have been uneven within and across countries. Weak structural frameworks for implementation, enforcement, accountability, monitoring and evaluation remain an underlying issue for many countries. There is much scope for improvement if political support can be leveraged to strengthen the national institutional machinery devoted to disability.

35. The following section will focus on how disability can be successfully positioned as a cross-cutting development issue, specifically: (a) the importance of fostering effective partnerships; (b) reflection on the different approaches to mainstreaming, and a review of the lessons learned from social groups with another focus, that of gender mainstreaming; and (c) demonstrating examples of effective approaches to disability inclusion at the regional level for the successful positioning of disability in the context of development.

A. Fostering effective multi-stakeholder partnerships

36. Disability development cooperation activities, in general, have been carried out on a track separate from mainstream development policies and programmes. Formerly, financing for disability was characterized largely by the traditional North-South approach of aid delivery. New and emerging frameworks for development cooperation in the previous decade (2000-2010) hold tremendous potential to bridge the existing gap between policy and practice.

37. While the growth in both South-South and triangular cooperation has been no substitute for North-South cooperation, it can be particularly effective for sharing best practices, experiences and resources at the regional and subregional levels. Such new modalities are better placed to promote cooperation that can transform global commitment into actionable outcomes at the local level. This could be achieved through the effective formulation of regional and national plans, where implementation is strengthened by the use of measurable targets and indicators for monitoring progress in specific local contexts. The growth in regional bodies and regional alliances in recent years should be harnessed to exploit their strengths, in promoting development initiatives inclusive of disability.

38. In addition, new actors and partners — including civil society, the private sector, private philanthropic organizations, community-based organizations and local governments — have been playing an increasingly prominent role in the development process. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for example, has provided a legal framework for promoting the roles and responsibilities of a range of stakeholders, with complementary options to enforce accountability.

39. Civil society has long played a crucial role — in advocacy and in implementation — of projects and services at the grass-roots level. The increasingly important role of the private sector can not only generate innumerable benefits but also accelerate progress. For example, the private sector can increase visibility, assist in the transfer of technology, adopt business practices that combat discrimination against persons with disabilities, and promote innovative approaches to disability mainstreaming while leveraging its comparative advantage in the business sector.

40. Also in this context, obtaining support from a wide range of private philanthropic organizations or foundations could greatly complement the resource lacunae faced by developing countries in particular. The 2012 Hudson Institute *Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances*, for example, estimated that total philanthropic giving to developing countries was approximately $56 billion in 2010.

41. Forms of decentralized cooperation partnerships have been gaining ground rapidly, whereby multi-stakeholder engagement between local government authorities and civil society has played an increasingly central role in development.[10] This bottom-up approach mobilizes and draws on the capacity, knowledge and expertise of local actors. In the context of disability, such forms of partnership can be particularly helpful in capitalizing on local expertise and knowledge, based on the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities.

42. The transfer of technology, especially related to the green economy, has become another important area of development partnership. Comparable strategies can be developed — as specifically required by the Convention — to facilitate access to assistive devices through technology-transfer opportunities.

B. Strategic approaches: lessons from mainstreaming cross-cutting development issues

43. Following the adoption of the Convention, the need to mainstream disability has become a priority in the international community. Furthermore, the experience of the United Nations in advancing gender equality was one that could be emulated: the various strategies for gender mainstreaming over the past three decades can offer direction for promoting disability-inclusive development.

44. Similar to current efforts in the disability field, initial efforts in gender mainstreaming had focused on separate, targeted activities for women which, by their nature, overlooked issues of empowerment and participation in decision-making, ultimately resulting in limited success. Different approaches that included efforts to integrate women into economic development — by focusing on income-generating projects for women — gained popularity in the 1970s. They evolved as advocates shifted their focus to show that development efforts lost out when the actual, and potential, contribution of women was overlooked.[11] With the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, there emerged a decisive step to move gender equality away from policy intent and onto the agenda for action. Along with this new movement, the widespread use of gender mainstreaming emerged as the preferred approach to the advancement of the rights of women in society and development.

45. Applying the concept of mainstreaming in the context of disability will mean trying to ensure that the concerns and experiences of persons with disabilities are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all development policies and projects, so that their exclusion will not be perpetuated by advancements in development ideology, planning and implementation. A critical element in the mainstreaming approach was its ambition to give attention to gender

[10] See *A renewed global partnership for development*, available from: www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/untaskteam_undf/report2.shtml.

[11] Janet Momsen, *Gender and Development* (New York, Routledge, 2004).

equality from the initial stages of processes. That helped to influence goals, strategies and resource allocations and thus bring about real changes in policies, programmes and other activities, and made a real difference to gender equality. In the case of disability mainstreaming, success will depend on creating an enabling environment that would allow persons with disabilities to participate fully in, and contribute to, the development process.

1. Strengthening coherence and coordination on disability issues within the United Nations system

46. Lessons from gender mainstreaming also showed the strength of adopting a system-wide policy on mainstreaming, where the responsibility rested at the highest levels. Within the United Nations system, in 2006, the Chief Executives Board for Coordination called for a system-wide action plan, that included indicators and timetables, allocated responsibilities, established accountability mechanisms and allocated resources in order to operationalize the gender mainstreaming strategy. In response to the Chief Executives Board for Coordination policy, the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, established under the leadership of UN-Women, has sought to increase coherence and coordination and serve as an accountability framework. Such a system-wide strategy might be considered to mainstream disability in the work of the United Nations system.

47. In its resolution 67/266 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, which establishes key system-wide policy orientation for development cooperation and country-level modalities of the United Nations, the General Assembly requests the United Nations development system to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities in its operational activities for development, including in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), to address the continuing lack of adequate and reliable information on disability, and to strengthen coherence and coordination across the United Nations system in this regard. The resolution provided a mandate for United Nations country teams that lead the UNDAF process at the country level to support activities that promoted the inclusion of disability in programmatic work.

48. The World Bank is currently conducting a review and update of the environmental and social safeguard policies, as part of its core values, to protect the environment and to ensure inclusive and sustainable development. As part of this ongoing process, the Bank is considering emerging issues, including disability, among other development concerns.

2. Ensuring a "no-gap" policy

49. Results-based mainstreaming of disability in development requires the action of all key stakeholders. In assessing the scope for mainstreaming disability in the development agenda, it may be helpful to consider the process in the light of the "no-gap policy" that recognizes that all actors, including the United Nations system, Governments and civil society, should work together to achieve the goal of disability inclusion. Different actors need to ensure that, in their respective spheres of responsibility, the necessary opportunities and access is being offered to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. If any one element of the network

fails in this obligation, persons with disabilities will not be able to reap the benefit of the other elements.

50. The responsibilities of Member States have been set out in the relevant human rights and development instruments: the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular, embodies the commitment of States Members of the United Nations to strengthen the international normative framework for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development. Civil society, and organizations of persons with disabilities in particular, could advocate for the inclusion of the disability perspective in all related efforts. The private sector could become more involved in making social and developmental processes more accessible through technological or other innovations.

51. Both the HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming experiences have revealed the importance of developing plans, complemented by concrete, measurable actions, within specific sectors and contexts. Greater effort could be made to incorporate disability issues into organizational policy and practice, whether for United Nations agencies, Governments, or development agencies, in the form of human resource policy, mission statements and budget allocations, that were then overseen by adequate accountability mechanisms. Measurable goals, targets or indicators serve the purposes of monitoring progress, ensuring accountability, and enabling more efficient allocation of resources to achieve the desired outcomes.

C. Experiences in mainstreaming disability: a regional perspective

52. Over the years, Member States and regions have been accumulating experience in mainstreaming disability in development. These initiatives have ranged from strengthening the policy framework, adopting and implementing strategies and plans of action, increasing resource allocation, and establishing new institutional arrangements to create conditions that promoted the pursuit of inclusive, equitable and sustainable development for all, including persons with disabilities.

53. The three Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons[12] and the European Disability Strategy (2010-2020) have illustrated how disability is being addressed at the regional level, by addressing cross-cutting concerns (such as accessibility) while utilizing various forms of association (such as public-private partnerships), and linking policy with plans of action, resources and implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

1. Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons

54. According to two recent publications by ESCAP,[13] and the outcomes of two regional surveys targeting 62 Governments of the ESCAP membership and 129 civil society entities — remarkable progress has been made in the Asia and the Pacific

[12] The first and second Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons were implemented during 1993-2002 and 2003-2012. The third Decade, and its guiding plan of action, was launched recently during the ESCAP High-level Intergovernmental Conference in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in November 2012. See *Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific*, ESCAP, Bangkok, November 2012 (ST/ESCAP/2648).

[13] *Disability at a Glance 2012: Strengthening the Evidence Base in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/2642) and *Disability, Livelihood and Poverty in Asia and the Pacific* (ST/ESCAP/2643).

region. There have been advances in the participation and empowerment of persons with disabilities through greater access to physical and informational environments in the previous two Asian and Pacific Decades, covering the periods 1993 to 2002 and 2003 to 2012.

55. Building upon the success achieved in the two decades, the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting in Incheon, Republic of Korea in October 2012, launched the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022) by adopting the Incheon Strategy and the Ministerial Declaration.

56. The Incheon Strategy has provided the ESCAP region, and the world, with the first set of regionally endorsed, disability-inclusive, development goals. Sharing some similarities with the Millennium Development Goals, the Strategy comprises 10 interrelated, time-bound goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators. The Strategy charts the course of Asian-Pacific action for the next 10 years, making it possible to track and measure improvements in the quality of life and fulfilment of the rights of the region's 650 million persons with disabilities.[14]

57. Some key lessons can be learned from the previous two Decades.

58. First, there is a clear political will and a sense of ownership by stakeholders that are translated into tangible action on the ground. Secondly, strategies and plans for the Decades have been developed in line with the international normative framework on disability, reflecting priority concerns in the local and regional contexts. Thirdly, institutions and mechanisms that supported the implementation of the Decade included thematic working groups on disability that closely collaborated with the United Nations Secretariat, experts and disabled persons organizations. Fourthly, regional monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were established to implement the Decades.

59. For the new Decade, and under the Incheon Strategy, national coordination mechanisms and focal points on statistics are required to assume their monitoring responsibilities by submitting relevant data on the implementation of the Strategy at the national level.

60. Broad-based consultations and a participatory approach were key ingredients in the development of the Decades' strategies and plans of actions, contributing to greater ownership and coordination among all stakeholders. Learning from the experiences of the previous two Decades, the Incheon Strategy has called for strengthened public-private partnerships and multisectoral collaboration in promoting accessibility, employment opportunities and entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities.

2. European Disability Strategy (2010-2020): advancing environmental accessibility to promote inclusive development for all

61. In November 2010, the European Commission adopted the European Disability Strategy (2010-2020) aimed at breaking down barriers that have prevented persons with disabilities from participating on an equal basis in

[14] Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022), available from: www.unescap.org/sdd/publications/IncheonStrategy/Incheon-Strategy.pdf.

development and society.[15] The Strategy regarded disability as an issue of rights and outlined how the European Union and national Governments could empower persons with disabilities strategically to promote the full enjoyment of their rights.

62. The main aspects of the "accessibility initiative" include consideration of options for use of standardization, public procurement, or grant aid and assistance rules to make all goods and services accessible to persons with disabilities, while fostering a European Union market for assistive devices in line with the proposed "European Accessibility Act".[16]

63. The new development in the European Union region provides a unique approach to how policies and legislation, institutional arrangements, technical standards and their compliance and practical follow-up in capacity-building can promote accessibility and inclusive development for all.

64. First, the European Union legal framework on accessibility was guided by the principle that environmental accessibility was an essential right for all and a fundamental precondition and integral part of development. All initiatives are based on article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam[17] and its related acts and agreements, including the European Council Directive on "Equal treatment in employment and education".[18]

65 The "Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities"[19] recognizes the growing need to address ageing and disability issues in development of specific standards and solutions in the area of assistive technology and accessible building design. The Guide is intended to be part of the overall framework that standards bodies can use in their efforts to support the need for more accessible products and services.

66. In December 2007, the European Commission, issued a new mandate,[20] which seeks to: (a) use public procurement to promote accessibly in built environments, following the Design for All and Accessibility requirements in the technical specifications in the contact documentation for public bids; and (b) provide a mechanism through which public procurers have access to an online toolkit, enabling them to easily make use of the harmonized requirements in procurement processes.

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[15] *European Disability Strategy 2010-2020: A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe*, European Commission, available from: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0636:FIN:EN:PDF.

[16] Indicative road map available from: http://ec.europa.eu/governance/impact/planned_ia/docs/2012_just_025_european_accessibiliy_act_en.pdf.

[17] The Treaty of Amsterdam was signed on 2 October 1997 and entered into force on 1 May 1999; available from: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/treaties/amsterdam_treaty/a10000_en.htm.

[18] Directive 2000/78/EC entered into force on 27 November 2000; available from: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/employment_rights_and_work_organisation/c10823_en.htm.

[19] "Guidelines for standards developers to address the needs of older persons and persons with disabilities". See: ftp://ftp.cen.eu/boss/reference_documents/guides/cen_clc/cen_clc_6.pdf.

[20] See: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/standards_policy/mandates/database/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.detail&id=392.

67. A report[21] issued by the European Committee for Standardization Technical Committee stated that it is possible to achieve built environments that are both accessible and sustainable without additional costly rework if Design for All is considered an inherent part of the European Union public procurement process. The report further views a European Union common approach to public procurement drawing on good examples to establish common references and procedures that all countries can follow will be useful in this context.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusion

68. Despite significant advancement in the international normative framework on disability during the last three decades, limited action has taken place on the ground. The lack of understanding of disability as a development issue, the lack of policy coherence and coordination in terms of addressing disability and development, and the absence of specific institutions and resources for action have been contributing factors.

69. The international community now has several opportunities to address these critical gaps, particularly in the context of the General Assembly High-level Meeting on disability and development, and in relation to the ongoing dialogue towards a post-2015 development agenda.

70. Learning from the experience of mainstreaming other cross-cutting issues, the present report has reviewed practical steps that could be taken by the United Nations system, Governments, civil society and other sectors to make the mainstreaming of disability a central part of all development activities. The successful integration of disability rests in greater awareness of disability as a cross-cutting development issue, and greater appreciation of the productive capacity of persons with disabilities to make a full and effective contribution to achieving globally agreed development goals.

71. Accessibility, although it is central as both a means and goal to inclusive development, has yet to be embraced and concretized in mainstream development policy and programming. Accessibility should be considered as an investment in infrastructures that benefit all and contribute to inclusive, sustainable and equitable development.

72. The following steps can integrate disability in development policies and programmes at the national, regional and global levels.

(a) Promoting understanding of why disability is an essential element of inclusive and sustainable development. This can be supported by the synthesizing of existing research and available information to establish the linkages between disability and other specific development issues related to the environment, poverty eradication, education, work and employment, among others;

[21] See: ftp://ftp.cen.eu/CEN/Sectors/Accessibility/ReportAccessibilityBuiltEnvironment%20Final.pdf.

(b) Publication of a periodic United Nations global report on disability and development to benchmark progress in the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities in society and development;

(c) Inclusion of disability indicators, such as indicators on accessibility, in the design of monitoring and evaluation tools of goals and targets of the post-2015 development framework;

(d) Organizing, as part of international and regional development cooperation, global and regional forums on disability and development, in conjunction with existing mainstream development conferences and disability-related meetings;

(e) Adopting a result-based management approach to disability integration in development programming. Disability issues should be consistently reflected throughout the programme cycle; including policy analysis, planning and budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation that will enable development practitioners to better manage their projects to bring about sustained improvements in the lives of persons with disabilities;

(f) Strengthening institutional responsibility to promote good governance and accountability of all actors in promoting disability. This should include the development of clear and measurable targets and indicators with baselines, which can be used for monitoring and evaluation.

Recommendations

73. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following specific recommendations to accelerate the mainstreaming of disability in development:

74. **Accessibility should be a central consideration in the emerging post-2015 development agenda, and regarded as an essential investment for sustainable development, advancing accessibility and the progressive removal of barriers to the physical environment, transportation and information and communications, incorporating the principle of universal design.**

75. **Member States should develop strategies or plans of action to include persons with disabilities in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals. The implementation of such strategies and plans of action should be monitored through the use of targets and indicators.**

76. **National focal points and coordination mechanisms may be designated and strengthened with a view to promoting accountability, monitoring and evaluation, in close consultation with relevant stakeholders, particularly through the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities.**

77. **The United Nations system, in collaboration with Governments and civil society, should promote disability as a cross-cutting issue in the United Nations operational activities for development.**

78. **A United Nations system-wide action plan on disability mainstreaming and empowerment of persons with disabilities should be considered in the work of the United Nations system.**

79. **Regional commissions and organizations, together with their subregional and local offices should, within their mandates, promote the mainstreaming of**

disability in their programmes and activities, with an emphasis on participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organizations.

80. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships should be promoted, as a strategy for global, regional and national follow-up to the outcome of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Disability and Development.**

81. **New stakeholders from civil society, academia, the private sector and others should be encouraged to explore opportunities for collaborations with Governments, the United Nations system and organizations of persons with disabilities to mainstream disability in all development efforts.**